Worksheet 2 Ethical, moral and cultural issues

Task 1 Social Media

Use the Internet to find answers to the following questions:

1. What percentage of UK adults who are online use Facebook?

2. What proportion of UK adults use online banking?

3. “Social networking sites improve the quality of people’s lives.” List some arguments for and against this statement. (Try a Google search on “social networking – good or bad?”)

4. List some instances where social media sites have been a great force for good in a crisis situation, and some instances in which they have brought devastating consequences to individuals or society.

Task 2 eGovernment

1. Research ways in which digital technology can involve citizens in political and economic decision-making

2. Consider the risks to effective decision-making posed by the ideas you found in part 1.

3. Why do you think that Estonia can organise a national system for electronic health records, while the UK has not?

4. You have secured a position as a virtual intern at XYZeVote Gmbh, a startup from Wiesbaden, who are working on a secure online voting system for local and state elections for German, EU and eventually global markets. You have been tasked with bringing a fresh perspective to their project by writing a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of online voting.

Task 3 Automated decision-making

1. Make a list of three areas where you feel that automated decision-making is an excellent idea, and three where it would be inappropriate.

2 Using your examples, try to identify a set of principles by which to determine when it is appropriate to automate decisions.

3 Apply the principles you found in part 2, above, to these examples and discuss if the use of automated decision-making is appropriate.

(a) An insurance company requires you to install a tracking device in your car. Your premium is then based on data including when and how you drive, where you live, your age and the value of your car.

(b) The same insurance company requires you to take a medical test, which includes a DNA swab. Premiums for driving, household goods and life insurance are then all calculated on data including your DNA, and in particular any inherited medical conditions or indications of likely behaviour.

(c) Given your excellent predicted grade in A-level Computer Science, you have decided to apply for jobs in the defence sector, some of which involve a comprehensive security vetting process. This includes a third party HR agency examining details not only of your designated friends on social media, but their friends as well.

(d) You bought a surprisingly cheap smartphone. You clicked ‘agree’ to a long list of terms and conditions. One of them allows the smartphone retailer to monitor all text and internet communications and sell data about your contacts, purchases and location to direct marketing companies.